

Sexual Misconduct & Sexual Assault

Sexual Misconduct & Sexual Assault

[Information you should know if you or someone you know is a victim of sexual assault](#)

Resources

Confidential Resources

- [ACCESS \(Assault Care Center Extending Shelter and Support\) \(515-29-ALERT\)](#): Provides victims with an ACCESS advocate who is trained to assist victims of sexual misconduct and can speak with students confidentially as they process through their experience and consider their options.
- [ISU Student Counseling Services \(SCS\) \(515-294-5056\)](#): Students can meet with a confidential mental health counselor.
- [Mary Greeley Medical Center \(515-239-2011\)](#)
- [Planned Parenthood of Ames \(515-292-1000\)](#)
- [ISU Thielen Student Health Center \(515-294-5801\)](#): Students can meet with a confidential health care provider.

Campus Resources

- [Dean of Students Office \(515-294-1020\)](#): Staff can assist a student in filing formal complaints or, if the student does not want to file a formal complaint, the staff can work with the student to address concerns over housing, class assignments or schedules, leaves of absence, withdrawal or other academic concerns. The office staff can also assist the student in notifying ISU Police or local law enforcement, if the student so requests.
- [Margaret Sloss Women's Center \(MSWC\) \(515-294-4154\)](#): The MSWC provides support and information through educational outreach, appropriate referral services, and a safe space.
- [ISU Police Division \(515-294-4428\)](#): Contacting ISU Police does not mean a student must pursue criminal charges. ISU Police can advise students of their options, help preserve evidence while they consider options, and assist students in safety planning.

Community Resources

- [Ames Police Department \(Non-Emergency: 515-239-5133 or 911\)](#)
- [Story County Sheriff's Office \(515-382-6566\)](#)
- [Story County Attorney's Office \(515-382-7255\)](#)
- [Victim Assistance Program \(515-382-7255\)](#)

Sexual Misconduct FAQ

- [Will the information I share about sexual assault be kept confidential?](#)
- [What options do I have for reporting sexual misconduct?](#)
- [What are the benefits of reporting a sexual assault to the police?](#)
- [What if I'm an employee at the university and I became aware of an incident of sexual misconduct issue?](#)
- [Why am I encouraged to report an incident of sexual misconduct to the Dean of Students Office?](#)
- [Should I report a sexual assault if I was drinking underage when it occurred?](#)
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Did You Know?

1. [The community has a sexual assault response team](#)
2. [Off-campus assaults are covered by ISU policy](#)
3. [Some resources are confidential](#)
4. [ISU can help with housing changes or class conflicts after an assault](#)
5. [Victims or witnesses who used alcohol/drugs should not be afraid to report the assault.](#)

Students Who May Be Victims of Sexual Misconduct

If you or someone you know may be a victim of sexual misconduct or assault, you are strongly encouraged to seek immediate assistance.

Assistance can be obtained 24 hours a day, 7 days a week from:

- [ACCESS](#)
(Assault Care Center Extending Shelter and Support) 800-203-3488 for a confidential advocate
- [Mary Greeley Medical Center](#) 515-239-2011 for a confidential health examination or services
- [ISU Police](#)
911 from a campus phone or 515-294-4428
- [Ames Police](#)
911 or 515-239-5133

During business hours, you may also seek assistance from the [ISU Dean of Students Office](#) 515-294-1020.

- [Why should I seek medical attention when I haven't decided whether I want to report the assault to the police or the university?](#)
- [Where can I find information about ISU crime statistics?](#)
- [Where can I find information on how to reduce my risk of being a victim of sexual assault?](#)

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

Becoming the best.

1010 Student Services Building, Ames, Iowa 50011
(515) 294-1021

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Did You Know?

1. The community has a sexual assault response team

The [Story County Sexual Assault Response Team \(SART\)](#) provides victims' access to specially trained professionals who can enact a community coordinated response to sexual assaults. In individual cases, a three-person team consisting of a police officer, sexual assault nurse examiner, and advocate respond to sexual assault reports, offering their services but leaving all decisions to the victim/survivor. The SART process can be enacted 24 hours a day, seven days a week by calling 515-292-5378.

2. Off-campus assaults are covered by ISU policy

Jurisdiction

According to the university Student Disciplinary Regulations, sections 4.1.2 and 4.1.3, this policy shall cover both on-campus and off-campus conduct, as those terms are described below.

On-Campus Violations: The campus includes the geographic confines of the university, including its land, institutional roads and buildings, its leased premises, common areas at leased premises, the property, facilities and leased premises of organizations affiliated with the university, such as the Memorial Union, university housing, and university-recognized housing. University housing includes all types of university residence housing such as halls and apartments. University-recognized housing includes fraternity and sorority chapter dwellings.

Off-Campus Violations: Students should be aware that off campus violations that affect a clear and distinct interest of the university are subject to disciplinary sanctions. As examples, sexual misconduct and harassment are within the university's interests when the behavior:

- Involves conduct directed at or by a university student or other member of the university community (e.g., private house party, outside employment);
- Occurs during university-sponsored events (e.g., field trips, social or educational functions, university-related travel, student recruitment activities, internships and service learning experiences);
- Occurs during the events of organizations affiliated with the university, including the events of student organizations;
- Occurs during a Study Abroad Program or other international travel; or
- Poses a disruption or threat to the university community.

3. Some resources are confidential

CONFIDENTIAL: Under Iowa law, communications with some individuals are *confidential*. This means that any information shared by the victim/survivor with a specific individual will not be used against him or her in court or shared with others. This individual cannot be subpoenaed to testify against the victim/survivor in a court of law.

Students should always confirm whether confidentiality applies to the communication. Generally, confidentiality applies when a student seeks services from the following persons:

- ACCESS advocate
- Psychological counselor (including counselors at ISU Student Counseling Services)
- Health care provider (including medical professionals at ISU Thielen Student Health Center)
- Personal attorney
- Religious/spiritual counselor

PRIVATE: Iowa State University is committed to creating an environment that encourages students to come forward if they have experienced any form of sexual misconduct. The university will safeguard the identities of the students who seek help or who report sexual misconduct. That is, university employees will seek to keep the information private (other than a counselor or medical provider).

A university employee cannot guarantee complete confidentiality, but the individual can guarantee privacy. Information is disclosed only to select officials who have an essential need to know in order to carry out their university responsibilities. As is the case with any educational institution, the university must balance the needs of the individual student with its

obligation to protect the safety and well being of the community at large. Therefore, depending on the seriousness of the alleged incident, further action may be necessary, including a campus security alert. The alert, however, would never contain any information identifying the student who brought the complaint.

4. ISU can help with housing changes or class conflicts after an assault

The Dean of Students office staff can assist a student in filing formal complaints or, if the student is not ready to file a formal complaint, the staff can work with him or her to address concerns over housing, class assignments or schedules, leaves of absence, withdrawal or other academic concerns. The office staff can also assist the student in notifying ISU Police or local law enforcement, if the student so requests.

Contact information: www.dso.iastate.edu

1010 Student Services Building
515-294-1020

5. Victims or witnesses who used alcohol/drugs should not be afraid to report the assault.

Students are strongly encouraged to report incidents of, or share information about, sexual misconduct as soon as possible. This is true even if the student with a complaint or a witness may have concern that his or her own alcohol or drug use, or other prohibited activity were involved. The Office of Judicial Affairs will not pursue disciplinary violations against a student with a complaint or a witness for his or her improper use of alcohol or drugs if the student is making a good faith report of sexual misconduct.

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If you or someone you know has been sexually assaulted, you may find the following information helpful:

- First, remember that what happened is not your fault. You did not cause the assault, and no matter what happened, you did not deserve it.
- Get to a safe place.
- Try not to change anything at the location where the assault occurred.
- Remember that eating or drinking, showering, brushing your teeth, going to the bathroom, and changing or altering your clothes could destroy physical evidence that may be helpful if you later decide to pursue legal action.
- Consider contacting [Story County SART](#) or one of its individual agencies to talk about and possibly report the assault. These agencies can provide you with medical attention, emotional support, and law enforcement services and can help you explore your various options.
- Even if you don't want to file a police report, consider receiving medical attention. A Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner will help ensure that you are healthy, provide options to prevent pregnancy or sexually transmitted infections, and collect valuable evidence that may be useful in the future, even if you are unsure about pursuing legal action now. Physical evidence can only be collected for a short period of time after an assault, but in many cases, a survivor has ten years to decide whether to pursue a criminal case (or ten years after one's 18th birthday if the assault took place prior to the survivor turning 18).
- The medical exam and follow up visits are free in Iowa, even if you do not report the assault to the police.
- You have a right to be believed and to receive appropriate medical, emotional, and legal support if you choose such options.

How to support someone who has just been sexually assaulted:

- Believe them.
- Listen -- without judging.
- Let them know that you support and care about them, that they are not responsible for the incident.
- Emphasize that there is help available.
- Let them know they are not alone.
- Let them know about the services of [ACCESS](#) (Assault Care Center Extending Support) and [SART](#) (Sexual Assault Response Team).
- Tell them about the ACCESS crisis number answered 24-hours a day (29-ALERT) or 1-800-203-3488).
- Addition information:
 - [Crisis and continuing support](#)
 - [Common Reactions experienced by many sexual assault survivors](#)

Sexual Misconduct & Sexual Assault

FAQs

1. If I share information about a sexual assault, what is the difference between confidentiality and privacy?

CONFIDENTIAL: Under Iowa law, communications with some individuals are *confidential*. This means that any information shared by the victim/survivor with a specific individual will not be used against him or her in court or shared with others. This individual cannot be subpoenaed to testify against the victim/survivor in a court of law.

Students should always confirm whether confidentiality applies to the communication. Generally, confidentiality applies when a student seeks services from the following persons:

- ACCESS advocate
- Psychological counselor (including counselors at ISU Student Counseling Services)
- Health care provider (including medical professionals at ISU Thielen Student Health Center)
- Personal attorney
- Religious/spiritual counselor

PRIVATE: Iowa State University is committed to creating an environment that encourages students to come forward if they have experienced any form of sexual misconduct. The university will safeguard the identities of the students who seek help or who report sexual misconduct. That is, university employees will seek to keep the information private (other than a counselor or medical provider).

A university employee cannot guarantee complete confidentiality, but the individual can guarantee privacy. Information is disclosed only to select officials who have an essential need to know in order to carry out their university responsibilities. As is the case with any educational institution, the university must balance the needs of the individual student with its obligation to protect the safety and well being of the community at large. Therefore, depending on the seriousness of the alleged incident, further action may be necessary, including a campus security alert. The alert, however, would never contain any information identifying the student who brought the complaint.

2. What options do I have for reporting sexual misconduct?

In addition to supporting individual students affected by sexual misconduct, the university takes all incidents seriously and has a responsibility to address misconduct. When sexual misconduct involves criminal behavior, students are strongly encouraged to report the situation to law enforcement. The Dean of Students Office will assist the student in notifying ISU Police or local law enforcement if the student so requests. An incident can be reported even if the student has not decided whether to take legal action. Nonetheless, students are always free to report and are encouraged to share instances of such behavior with the Dean of Students Office (contact information below) regardless of whether or not they choose to press formal criminal charges with law enforcement.

Students are strongly encouraged to report incidents of, or share information about, sexual misconduct as soon as possible. This is true even if the student with a complaint or a witness may have concern that his or her own alcohol or drug use, or other prohibited activity were involved. The Office of Judicial Affairs will not pursue disciplinary violations against a student with a complaint or a witness for his or her improper use of alcohol or drugs if the student is making a good faith report of sexual misconduct.

The university can take action only if the university is made aware of the behavior. If a university administrator becomes aware of a complaint or other violation of this policy, the administrator should bring the information to the Dean of Students Office so that concerns are heard and services can be offered to the affected students.

The university strongly encourages prompt reporting of complaints and information rather than risking any student's well being. Although there is no time limit on the reporting of formal charges with the university, the university may ultimately be unable to adequately investigate if too much time has passed or if the accused student has graduated. Factors that could negatively affect the university's ability to investigate include the loss of physical evidence (e.g., prompt medical examinations are critical to preserving the physical evidence of sexual assault), the potential departure of witnesses, or loss of memory.

The university strongly encourages students to report concerns to either or both of the following offices:

- For emergencies, contact 911. For non-emergencies, or if criminal behavior is involved, students are encouraged to contact ISU Police by telephone at 515-294-4428 or in person at room 55, Armory Building. **Contacting ISU Police does not mean you must pursue charges. ISU Police can advise you of your options and can also preserve evidence while you consider your options.**
- To seek assistance and support, or to report misconduct, contact the Dean of Students Office (1010 Student Services Building, 515-294-1020, dso@iastate.edu)

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- In all situations, the university's goal is to treat the student who reports misconduct with sensitivity and fairness, while also ensuring the accused individual receives due process if any disciplinary action is to be imposed.
- The Dean of Students Office will make a student services staff member available to a student with a complaint if the student would like assistance throughout any university investigation or adjudication process. This staff member is not an "advocate" as that term is used below (see "Confidential Advocacy and Support"), nor is that staff person a representative who will speak on behalf of the student in any investigatory or adjudication process. Rather, the staff member serves as a point of contact to answer questions and explain processes, join the student in meetings, and make sure the student's expressed needs are being addressed.
- For complaints against other students, the Student Disciplinary Regulations shall govern the complaint, investigation, and adjudication process through the Office of Judicial Affairs. See the following sections of the [Student Disciplinary Regulations](#):
 - Section 2.1 - "Student Rights and Responsibilities"
 - Section 2.2 - "Complainant Rights and Responsibilities"
 - Section 5 - "Process"
- For complaints against faculty or staff, the investigation and adjudication may ultimately occur through the Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost (for faculty) or the Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity (for non-faculty employees). For complaints against faculty, the Faculty Handbook will govern the process.
- In situations where an accused student faces both a disciplinary complaint and a criminal charge, the university reserves the right to move forward with the disciplinary investigative and adjudication process at the same time the criminal process is proceeding.

3. What are the benefits of reporting a sexual assault to the police?

Contacting ISU Police does not mean you must pursue charges. ISU Police can advise you of your options and can also preserve evidence while you consider your options. ISU Police can also advise you on safety planning techniques.

For emergencies, contact 911. For non-emergencies students are encouraged to contact ISU Police by telephone at 515-294-4428 or in person at room 55, Armory Building. Or, contact the Ames Police Department by telephone at 515-239-5133 or in person at 515 Clark Avenue.

4. What if I'm an employee at the university and I have become aware of an incident of sexual misconduct?

For Employees: Suggested Steps if you Learn Someone has been Sexually Assaulted

As a member of the Iowa State University community, you may be called upon to provide support to a victim of sexual assault and to refer this person to professional resources. These steps are designed to help you best support and inform someone of the resources available to assist with the person's physical and emotional needs.

Some things to remember about your conversation with this person:

- Recognize that it can be an enormous step for someone to talk with another person about a sexual assault and that this person has placed trust in you by revealing the experience. That being said, remember that you are not a counselor, an investigator, or a state-certified victim advocate. Acknowledge the boundaries on your relationship with this person while helping her or him access the resources and assistance that can offer the best support and care.
- Given the trust the person has placed in you, please respect the person's privacy. Do not share the person's experience with others except for the Dean of Students Office, as explained below.
- Believe the person, support the person's choices, and refer the person to the appropriate resources listed below..
- You can assure the person that no records or reports of sexual assault are kept in the victim's permanent academic or personnel records.
- Finally, in addition to the resources available to the person, there are also resources available to you as an employee. If you feel you need to talk to someone about the impact of this situation for yourself personally, you can contact the Employee Assistance Program.

Share the following information:

1. Let the person know she or he can contact [ACCESS](#) (Assault Care Center Extending Shelter and Support) to speak with a confidential, state-certified victim advocate who is trained to work specifically with victims of sexual assault. The advocate can explain all of the options available to the person and also support the person through any of the next steps, which may include counseling, medical, university disciplinary processes, or law enforcement notification. If possible, offer the person the use of your phone and a private space to make the call.
2. Let the person know there are other resources in addition to the ACCESS advocate. Again, if possible, offer

the person the use of your phone and a private space to make the call, or offer to walk with the person to any of the on-campus offices.

1. **Medical Services:** the person may want to seek confidential medical attention to care for her or himself or to preserve evidence of the assault in the event criminal charges might be contemplated later. In Iowa, these exams are free.

1. **Confidential medical care only**

1. [Mary Greeley Medical Center](#)
2. [Planned Parenthood of Ames](#)
3. [Thielen Student Health Center](#)

2. **Preservation of evidence through forensic exam**

1. [Mary Greeley Medical Center](#)
2. [Planned Parenthood of Ames](#)

2. **Counseling Services:** the person may want to speak with a professional counselor in a confidential setting.

1. [Student Counseling Center](#) (for students)
2. Employee Assistance Program (for employees)

3. **Law Enforcement:** the person may wish to contact law enforcement even if the person has not decided whether to pursue criminal charges. Police can advise the person of options, help preserve evidence while the victim considers those options, and assist in safety planning and consideration. Contacting law enforcement does not mean the person must pursue criminal charges.

1. [ISU Police](#)
2. [Ames Police](#)

4. **Dean of Students Office:** a student can speak with the [Dean of Students Office](#) staff for any of the following matters:

1. Assistance with classes or housing
2. Information about interim steps to protect the student or campus
3. Information about the student disciplinary process
4. Additional services or resources on campus or in the community

3. Let the person know that you need to disclose the assault to the Dean of Students Office for purposes of complying with the Clery Act (a federal law requiring that campuses report and track crime statistics). This disclosure can be as broad or narrow as the person wants -- you do not need to disclose the name of the person you are meeting with if that person does not give permission to do so. In that case, simply report as much about the assault as you can (date, location) without identifying the person. To notify the Dean of Students Office, call 515-294-1020.
4. Let the person know about the Sexual Misconduct webpage -- consider showing the person the web page in your office and printing off a copy. The webpage has many resources and other helpful information for a person who has experienced a sexual assault.
5. Let the person know you believe and support her or him, and that you hope they will take some steps to help and care for her or himself.

Assistance can be obtained 24 hours a day, 7 days a week from:

ACCESS 800-203-3488 for a confidential advocate http://www.assaultcarecenter.org/	Mary Greeley Medical Center 515-239-2011 for a confidential health examination or services http://www.mgmc.org/
ISU Police 911 from a campus phone or 515-294-4428. http://www.dps.iastate.edu/?page_id=225	Ames Police 911 or 515-239-5133 http://www.cityofames.org/Police/

Other Resources

Dean of Students Office 515-294-1020 http://www.dso.iastate.edu/	Student Counseling Center 515-294-5056 http://www.public.iastate.edu/~stdtcouns/
Thielen Student Health Center 515-294-5801 http://www.health.iastate.edu/about/contact/	Women's Center 515-294-4154 http://www.dso.iastate.edu/wc/
Planned Parenthood of Ames 877-811-7526 http://www.plannedparenthood.org/health-center/centerDetails.asp?f=2385	

5. Why am I encouraged to report an incident of sexual misconduct to the Dean of Students Office?

The Dean of Students staff can assist a student in filing formal complaints or, if the student does not want to file a formal complaint, the staff can work with the student to address concerns over housing, class assignments or schedules, leaves of absence, withdrawal or other academic concerns. The office staff can also assist the student in notifying ISU Police or local law enforcement, if the student so requests.

The Dean of Students Office will make a student services staff member available to a student with a complaint if the student would like assistance throughout any university investigation or adjudication process. This staff member serves as a point of contact to answer questions and explain processes, join the student in meetings, and make sure the student's expressed needs are being addressed. This staff member is not an "advocate" (as described in the sexual misconduct policy) nor is that staff person a representative who will speak on behalf of the student in any investigatory or adjudication process.

In all situations, the university's goal is to treat the student who reports misconduct with sensitivity and fairness, while also ensuring the accused individual receives due process if any disciplinary action is to be imposed.

The Dean of Students Office and ISU Police may take immediate interim actions to protect the safety of the university community, to enable students with complaints and witnesses to continue studies, and to ensure the integrity of an investigation. These actions may include:

- Interim suspension of the accused student
- No-contact notices
- Modifying class or work schedules
- Making alternate housing arrangements
- Addressing other academic concerns (e.g., absences, assignments, grades, leaves of absence, withdrawal)

To seek assistance and support, or to report misconduct, contact the Dean of Students Office (1010 Student Services Building, 515-294-1020, dso@iastate.edu)

6. Should I report a sexual assault if I was drinking underage when it occurred?

Students are strongly encouraged to report incidents of, or share information about, sexual misconduct as soon as possible. This is true even if the student with a complaint or a witness may have concern that his or her own alcohol or drug use, or other prohibited activity were involved. The Office of Judicial Affairs will not pursue disciplinary violations against a student with a complaint or a witness for his or her improper use of alcohol or drugs if the student is making a good faith report of sexual misconduct.

7. Does it make a difference if the sexual misconduct occurs on or off campus?

No. According to the university Student Disciplinary Regulations, sections 4.1.2 and 4.1.3, the sexual misconduct, sexual assault, and sexual harassment policy covers both on-campus and off-campus conduct, as those terms are described below.

On-Campus Violations: The campus includes the geographic confines of the university, including its land, institutional roads and buildings, its leased premises, common areas at leased premises, the property, facilities and leased premises of organizations affiliated with the university, such as the Memorial Union, university housing, and university-recognized housing. University housing includes all types of university residence housing such as halls and apartments. University-recognized housing includes fraternity and sorority chapter dwellings.

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- o Involves conduct directed at or by a university student or other member of the university community (e.g., private house party, outside employment);
- o Occurs during university-sponsored events (e.g., field trips, social or educational functions, university-related travel, student recruitment activities, internships and service learning experiences);
- o Occurs during the events of organizations affiliated with the university, including the events of student organizations;
- o Occurs during a Study Abroad Program or other international travel; or
- o Poses a disruption or threat to the university community.

8. Why should I seek medical attention when I haven't decided whether I want to report the assault to the police or the university?

Seeking medical attention can help you in many ways. First, seeking medical attention can help you take care of your own health by checking for injuries, treating those injuries, and addressing the possibility of sexually transmitted infections.

Second, a forensic medical exam can preserve evidence of the assault. This is important even if you are currently undecided about your next steps because you may later decide to pursue criminal charges or university disciplinary charges - that evidence can help in both situations. A medical exam is not, however, required before pursuing criminal or university disciplinary charges.

In Iowa, initial medical exams are free for a person who has been sexually assaulted.

9. Where can I find information about ISU crime statistics?

http://www.dps.iastate.edu/pdfs/08safety_you.pdf

10. Where can I find information on how to reduce my risk of being a victim of sexual assault?

http://www.dps.iastate.edu/pdfs/08safety_you.pdf

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Crisis & Continuing Support ■■■■ ■■■ for Survivors of Sexual Assault

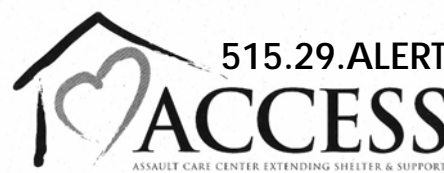
DO ■ *Remain calm.* It's common for you to feel shocked or outraged, but expressing these emotions to the victim might cause them more trauma. ■ *Believe the victim!* Make it clear that you believe that the assault happened and that it is not his or her fault. ■ *Give the victim control.* All control was removed from them at the time of the assault. Empower them to make their own decisions about what steps to take next. You're there to offer information, not advice. ■ *Maintain confidentiality.* It is the victims decision who they want to know about their assault, not your's. ■ Encourage them to contact **ACCESS** at **515.292.5378**, but allow them to decide whether or not they want to.

DON'T ■ Ask "why" questions that make make the victim defensive. ■ Get angry if the victim refuses to talk about their assault. ■ Pry into physically intimate aspects of the assault. ■ Confront the offender or encourage revenge. This will just create additional trauma for the victim. ■ Hold or touch the victim without asking permission. ■ Say everything is alright. ■ Tell the victim to "get over it." ■ Make promises you're not sure you can keep, such as promising that no one will ever hurt the victim again or that the offender will go to jail. ■ Constantly ask how they are doing.

Common Long-Term Effects

denial *anxiety* social withdrawal *flashbacks*
helplessness *difficulty with intimacy* fear *guilt*
dissociation anger *shame* dislike of sex
numbness difficulty concentrating *self-blame*
depression *mood swings* rationalization
nightmares loneliness *crisis of faith*
difficulty trusting themselves or others

For 24-hour assistance and support, or to report a sexual assault, call:



Adapted from : Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape. (2007). "A guide for friends & family of sexual violence survivors."



Common Reactions

Although each person is unique, there are some feelings and reactions that most sexual assault victims experience. It may be helpful for you to know about these responses. However, always remember that even though many victims experience similar reactions, there are still individual differences in how people respond to the trauma of sexual assault.

A victim may experience some or all of these symptoms. They may occur immediately, or you may have a delayed reaction weeks or months later. The feelings may be very intense at times. Sometimes the feelings seem to go away for a while and then come back again. Certain situations, such as seeing the assailant or testifying in court, may intensify the symptoms or cause them to reoccur after a period during which the victim has been feeling better.

Self-blame:

Often victims will go through a period where they recount all the things they could have done to prevent the assault. Reminding them that sexual assault is not a natural consequence for their decision is a good way to support them.

Shock:

Initially, most sexual assault victims react with shock and disbelief. They may feel numb and dazed, withdrawn and distant from other people. They may want to forget about what happened and avoid people or situations that remind them of the assault.

Intense Emotions:

Many survivors experience intense emotions in the aftermath of a sexual assault. At times, they may feel angry. Victims may also feel afraid, anxious or depressed. Often emotions will change frequently, resulting in a rollercoaster ride of contentment to extreme anxiety and back again.

Memories:

There may be periods when a victim is preoccupied with thoughts and feelings about the assault. They may have unwanted memories or flashbacks and nightmares. They may re-experience some of the sensations and feelings they had during the assault, such as fear and powerlessness.

Physical Symptoms:

Some victims have physical symptoms, such as sleep disturbances, headaches, and stomachaches. Victims may find that it is very difficult to concentrate on routine activities. They can also experience changes in sexuality, such as a loss of interest in sex or avoidance of sexual situations.